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School of the Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University

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thesis requirement for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts

Heath Matysek-Snyder, School of the Arts

Blair Clemo, School of the Arts

Susie Ganch, School of the Arts

Sonya Clark, School of the Arts

Dr. James Frazier, School of the Arts

Dr. F. Douglas Boudinot, Dean of the Graduate School

May 11, 2016

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COLLECTIVE CADENCE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of
Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

ALICIA DIETZ

Bachelors of Science in Journalism/Advertising, Ohio University, 2001

Director: HEATH MATYSEK-SNYDER
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, CRAFT/MATERIAL STUDIES

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
May 2016

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Abstract

COLLECTIVE CADENCE

By Alicia Dietz, MFA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2016

Major Director: Heath Matysek-Snyder
Assistant Professor, Craft/Material Studies

The Dichotomy

Being in full control
And very little control.
Yet feeling at ease in both.

Feeling secure in your daily job,
but not knowing for sure if you would lay your head
on your pillow that night.

And if you did,
it would be
in that space between
the anxiety of a late night call
and the comfort of a 0500 wake up.
Who feels comfort waking up at 0500 anyway?

An individual

who is part of a team.
A commander who takes care of her soldiers
and whose soldiers take care of her.
Absorb blame,
give credit,
call company formations
to make a brutal example
or to throw a party.

With all the chatter of a group bonded together.
Reveille
and then Retreat.
And then Reveille once again.
The familiar sounds of Taps –
the backdrop to
Last Roll Call.
You know for certain that silence is a sound –
a very loud one.
Louder than the firing of shots
or the roar of the engines
against the whisper of nothing but blades slicing through the air.

In +152F
or -60F
Or in the soup.
Pop above the muck to clear blue and 22.
And back through the soup again.
Decision Height
Go-around –
a redo.
We all need a go-around
every now and then.

How you would love
more go-arounds.
“We” are going out to dinner.
You mean, “I.”
Trusting only five people in 10 years with this.
Not allowing yourself to trust the others.
Yet having total trust in them, all the same.
Just not with that.

But trusting in the mission

and your sense of purpose.
Of being unique
and replaceable all at the same time.
Because both are crucial to the mission.
You walk the line to talk to your guys,
get to know their families.
See the micro within the macro.

Find a sense of place
in the midst of displacement.
And feel comfort in both.

“The best way to be heard is to listen.” – Ernest Kurtz

Sara Knutson: Process

Lost has meaning only in relation to found. – Terry Eagleton

Weight and Balance

You used to wake up to sounds
of mortars exploding 10km from your dust-filled tent.
Or the rev of rotors
starting to turn,
and the slow grumble of the chopper engine.

You have awakened to the melody of reveille,
the soothing rhythm of soldiers calling cadence;
to the crackling of snow
and ice shifting in your two-man igloo.

Now,
on most days,
you wake up only to hear
the soft sound of your alarm.

On others,
to the imagined echoes
of those memories.

And sometimes
waking is something you willingly do.
So you can accomplish a new mission,
a mission struggling to find purpose;
cause –
craving the balance
on which you used to rely.

You used to wake up
knowing a century of men and women
depended on your actions,

decisions,
knowledge,
humanity,
and trust in them.

Today,
you can barely find a dozen.

So sometimes,
waking is something you reluctantly do.
For in the depths of REM,
you are there with them.
And it is real.
For a moment.

With Michael
in your office,
shaking his hand.
Commending him for volunteering,
for stepping up to join his fellow brothers.
For going,
even with a pregnant wife.
For being a model for others –
especially to his daughter
whom he would hold only once.
But who may forever sense
her father's presence.

It is when you wake that
you feel his presence
in his absence.

It is in the house of your subconscious
that you sit with Sara.
Talk about leadership,
flying,
empathy,
and risk.

Where you take her on a test flight
in an aircraft
that outweighs you by 11,440 pounds
even when empty.

But you and that bird gracefully balanced each other,
requiring only small adjustments to level the other out.
Physically.
Mentally.
Emotionally.

You see the beauty of Denali
over 150 miles away
but who begs you to touch it;
it is so close.

That majestic mountain is what dreaming feels like –
Being 150 miles away.
No, 1,500 miles away.
If only.
Being an immeasurable distance away
but begging to reach out your hand
and touch.
If even for a moment.

It is when you wake that
you feel her presence
in her absence.

You wear a bracelet to remember.
No, you wear a bracelet for others.
Not to remember,
but to realize.

And so you make it your new mission
to find a way to communicate.
To serve your penance for surviving.
To make work,
a community,
progress.
To make peace.

It is when you wake that
you carry the weight;
you search for the balance.

When I was a brand new butterbar (2LT – the lowest officer rank in the Army), my unit was in Iraq. My first flight beyond the confines of the Alabama training was over Baghdad. But long before I climbed in the cockpit, I climbed onto the top of the Blackhawk, sat on the rotor hub, and assisted my crewchiefs while they adjusted the PC links. We were up there for hours. They were nearing the end of their duty day and the 1SG wanted to extend them, something that was happening routinely. We didn't need the aircraft for a mission the following morning, so I overrode that decision and we called it quits for the day.

That evening, I became “Mamma Dietz.” The name stuck. Through ten years, seven positions, and two company commands, that same leadership style was one of an unwavering sense of loyalty and desire to protect my soldiers while still accomplishing the mission. I expected – unfailingly – the same from them. The only way for them to live up to this standard was to have high expectations of them. I don't say this lightly. It was embedded in how I conducted daily operations and was a core value that was black and white for me. My command philosophy states these values clearly (Appendix A).

Leading was a rush for me. Watching over 128 soldiers. Putting out daily fires. Completing big missions. Planning. Improvising. Getting to know my guys and their families. Understanding what made them tick. It was personal for me. It was a rush. I didn't tire easily. But the way the Army works is to move officers in and out of command. It is a necessity. Change keeps units from becoming stale, from becoming complacent. My command time was over, and I was put into a position that I had done before, one with

few challenges and very little leadership. I was in charge of only four people. I was lost. Depressed. I felt little sense of mission or purpose.

Then came Sara.

She came to me in the S1 shop while she waited for a platoon leader position. We were extremely compatible colleagues, something that always seemed to be a delicate balance in the Army. Her personality was almost as big as her smile. We laughed a lot. I took her under my wing. Sure, I taught her all about awards and evaluations and personnel actions in the office, but mainly I tried to get her out to the flight line. I took her on test flights as often as I could. Some of her first flights out of flight school were with me in the maintenance test flight area, cutting off the engines to check the rotor RPM to ensure the helicopter was autorotating properly (gliding to the ground like a rock) in the case that both engines quit. She was always ready to grab her gear and go for a flight. She was an energetic sponge.

I put all of my energy into Sara. She was my new company. She was one person who replaced the 128 that I lost. She filled that void. She became my solace. And my salvation. If you could ask Sara today, she would probably tell you that she remembers me fondly and appreciates my mentorship, but I doubt she would know the extent of her impact on me. She carried me out of my depression. She gave me a mission and a sense of purpose.

I went to another maintenance company and she went to her flight company. I still called her up all the time for test flights. I would go over and talk about issues she was having with her soldiers or to let her brag about successes she had. I remember my first

mentor when I was that butterbar LT. I took pride in the fact that, after eight years, I had finally become that for someone else.

Then, I was off to Egypt to take command of my second company. That was the last time I saw her.

So how does mourning the loss of my friend translate to the work I have done over the past two years?

Process.

In the Army, I was a square peg in a square hole. I had the system figured out. My command philosophy clearly stated my mission and my intent. It was cut and dried.

Art is much more of a mystery. Foreign. An enemy for which I have done no reconnaissance nor have any intel.

In the transition between soldier and artist, I, once again, got lost. Wandering. Searching. Yearning. Making has filled that void. Process became my map – a way to explore, to experiment, to fail, and to learn. Process that lives as much in my head as in my hands.

In search of how my military process and art process could fuel each other, I looked to my past.

As an officer, I used FM 7-8, the field manual that the Army uses as their basis of leadership. I learned the battle drills necessary to conduct a movement to contact, a react to ambush, and a deliberate attack, among others. I learned about sectors of fire, how to bound and move in platoon formations, and the eight steps of TLP (Troop Leading Procedures).

1. Receive the mission
2. Issue the WARNO (warning order)
3. Make a tentative plan
4. Start necessary movement
5. Reconnoiter
6. Complete the plan
7. Issue the complete order
8. Supervise

Embedded in these troop leading procedure, the leader must develop an estimate of the situation based on the factors of METT-TC:¹

1. Mission
2. Enemy
3. Terrain and Weather
4. Troops Available
5. Time Available
6. Civilians Considerations

This type of decision-making process and analysis became ingrained in my psyche as an officer. I would work through most problems in this way. I still do. It was not until I analyzed my art-making process this past fall that I fully assessed my situation in this structured way.

The writings from this detailed analysis go far beyond the pages of this thesis, but the two main points are mission and enemy.

Mission

- What is my task and purpose for this mission?
- What is the commander's intent?
- What are the specific tasks for the operation (those that the commander stated must be accomplished)?
- What are the implied tasks of the operation?

¹ U.S. Department of the Army. *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*. Field Manual 3-21.8 (FM 7-8). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, March, 2007.

- What are the essential tasks of the operations (those absolutely required to accomplish the mission).²

Like the time just before I met Sara, the question of mission and purpose kept me up at night. They were the missing links that felt so natural in the Army. Re-reading *Art and Fear* was a good first step. Being introduced to *Spirituality of Imperfections* was a critical second. I've always believed that we only truly hear something when we are ready to hear it and experience something when we are ready to experience it. I was ready.

A boy was alone at the Grand Canyon and fell over the edge. There was no one there to hear him even if he yelled into that great big canyon. He asked to the heavens for help. God told him, "let go." Looking down at the treacherous rocks and the death that awaited him, he asked, "is there anyone else up there?"³

As long as we cling, we are bound. We hang on even when we need to let go to be free. Whatever my new mission was going to be, it required me to lose control.

Enemy

- What types of enemy unit is the platoon up against?
- What are these units?
- What is the enemy doing?
- How strong is he?
- What kind of equipment does he have?
- What are his capabilities and weaknesses?
- Where is he vulnerable?
- What are the enemy's intentions, doctrinal objectives, and most probably COA(s)?
- What can he do in response to friendly actions?⁴

² U.S. Department of the Army. *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*. Field Manual 3-21.8 (FM 7-8). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, March, 2007.

³ Kurtz, Ernest, and Katherine Ketcham. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Modern Wisdom from Classic Stories*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

⁴ U.S. Department of the Army. *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*. Field Manual 3-21.8 (FM 7-8). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, March, 2007.

The advice Hank Willis Thomas gave me was the following: “allow yourself to be vulnerable.” This was the only way to push past the fear. The fear of losing control, the fear of putting myself out there and not being accepted, and the fear of not succeeding. This required an adjustment of how I measure success, acceptance, and control. I had to treat myself as the enemy to poke at those vulnerabilities and to push the wound open even further to get to the core.

Storytelling was a way to do this. I would be honest to others about my struggle to adapt through this transition. Because of my openness, others generously shared their fears, anxieties, and successes. “Collective Cadence” was to be my new mission. Just as Sara led me through the dark, the act of making became my support. But I had to get through one obstacle first.

Erin Stalnaker: Audience

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when? - Hillel

The Ride

It was clear blue and 22.
You couldn't describe it any other way.
A decade of flying forced you to become a novice meteorologist,
to pay attention to moon cycles,
sunrise, and sunset.
To EENT and cloud ceilings.
That a small differential between temperature and dew point
caused fog.
That winds at altitude
affect your burn rate.

Even now,
four years later,
and probably forty after that,
you note the position of the moon
and know that it will be 15 degrees lower in an hour.
And the underside faces of leaves.
Drive past a flag,
or even –
ironically, a windsock,
and determine which direction you would have landed.

But you're on four wheels now,
not three.
The only thing overtop you is a worn-out canvas –
a bikini top –
that covers only the front seats.

And this top flaps in the wind.

Passive.
Affected by the wind.
Not active.
Not affecting the wind.
Not working in unison with three others to produce lift.
These wheels,
they stay on the ground.

Leaves and twigs,
remnants of rain water and splashes of mud
are your passengers in the back.
Even the maple's occasional propeller seeds come along for the ride –
and you chuckle at the irony.

You can only fit two people in the back –
the back of that beauty
of your '95 red
Jeep Wrangler.
Not the 11 that you could in that mammoth –
the back of that beauty
of your '88 OD green
UH-60A.

Now, you can pick up two friends
and go where your hearts desire.
Spend all day along the river
or in a museum.
Then you idly chat over drinks at a restaurant patio
and drop them back off
at home again.

Like those before
that you flew along the river
or overtop a museum.
That you,
not so idly,
chatted with over the intercom
and dropped back off
at home again.

Yet too,
unlike those before.
Those who you dropped off

with their rucks fully loaded,
with their radios and medical kits,
rations and munitions.
That you dropped off
with their maps
and bibles

Unlike those before.
Those who you dropped off
never to pick up again.

It's been hard for you.
Hard to find two people,
even two,
to fill the void where those 11 sat before.
Maybe because you weren't even trying.
Maybe because it was easier –
easier to close the door,
zip up the sides,
chock the wheels,
and let the battery die over the winter.

But when the seasons changed,
when the earth tilted to enjoy the company of the sun,
you knew it was time to fly again.
So you brushed off that bikini top,
and unzipped the sides.
You welcomed the company of the leaves and the twigs
And those little propeller seeds.
And you went for a ride.

The breeze brushed up against your face
and you put your hand out,
cupping it up and down
forming that airfoil that would fly.
The same airfoil you formed
in the backseat at the age of five
without a care.
Not a single one.
Now you formed it as a way to let those cares
spread their wings.
To fly a little farther away.

Up ahead you see another Jeep,
And as you pass, he gives you a wave.
You wave back
and smile.
And sink in the warmth and comfort
and let it wrap around you.
And know that you are part of a community.
A community
different from the one before.

But one that will wave
and welcome you.
As long as you pull out of the driveway
and go for a ride.

It took me a year to understand what “Fallen Soldiers” was about. Penance. My own struggle to understand why I am still here and others aren’t. Paying this penance was not a passive act. Each time I wrote a name, I heard myself asking, “Who am I writing this for?”

I was writing it for Erin. I just didn’t know it yet.

Eighteen months ago, I didn’t know Erin. I wrote her brother’s name, Noah Pier, on the inside heel of the right boot. He was 26 when he was killed in Marjah, Afghanistan. Like me, he loved pumpkin pie and the color red. I never got to meet Noah, but in writing his name, I began a friendship with Erin. She and her husband visited my house this past February. We talked about her brother; I got to know her. I learned of her struggles and successes. We spent almost three hours together talking and finding Noah along with a dozen other Marines. She took photos. She passed them on to the families that she knows.

Her mom submitted a story for “Collective Cadence.” Erin and I text back and forth every few weeks. She is going to stop by again on her way to D.C. the next time she visits Noah’s grave.

“Fallen Soldiers” was for Erin in the broadest sense. An afternoon visit with her changed the way that I defined audience. In some small way, in writing one name, I connected with Erin’s experience of loss.



Figure 1: *Fallen Soldiers (lower detail)*

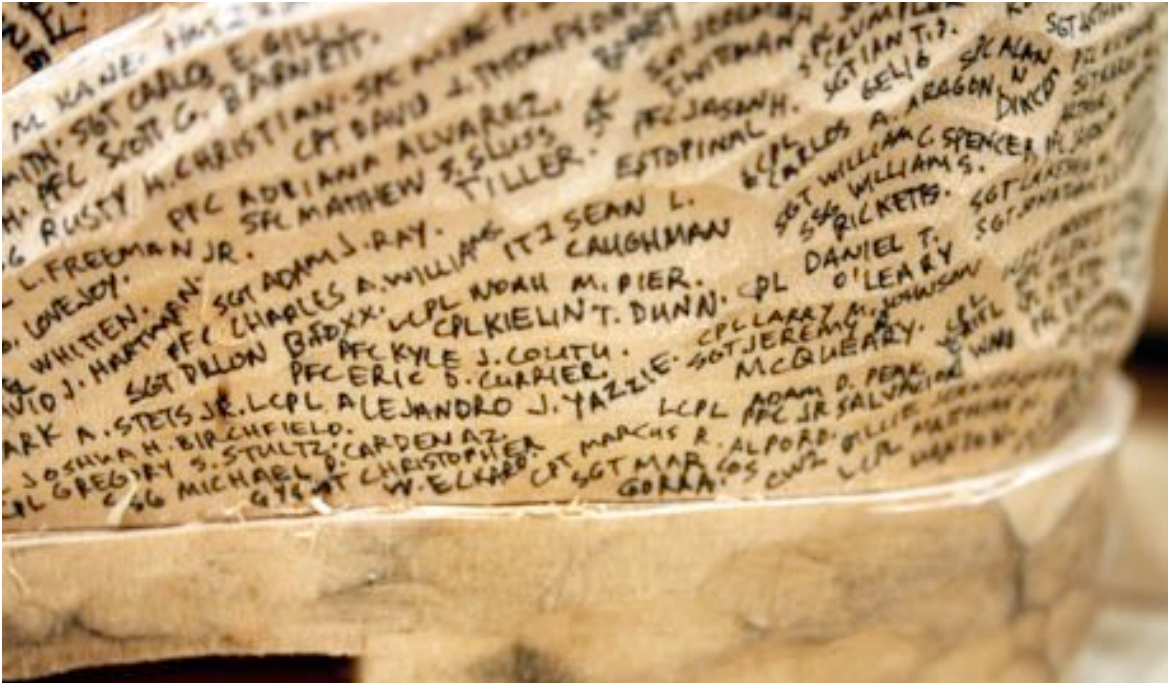


Figure 2: Fallen Soldiers (LCPL Noah M. Pier written on inside right boot)

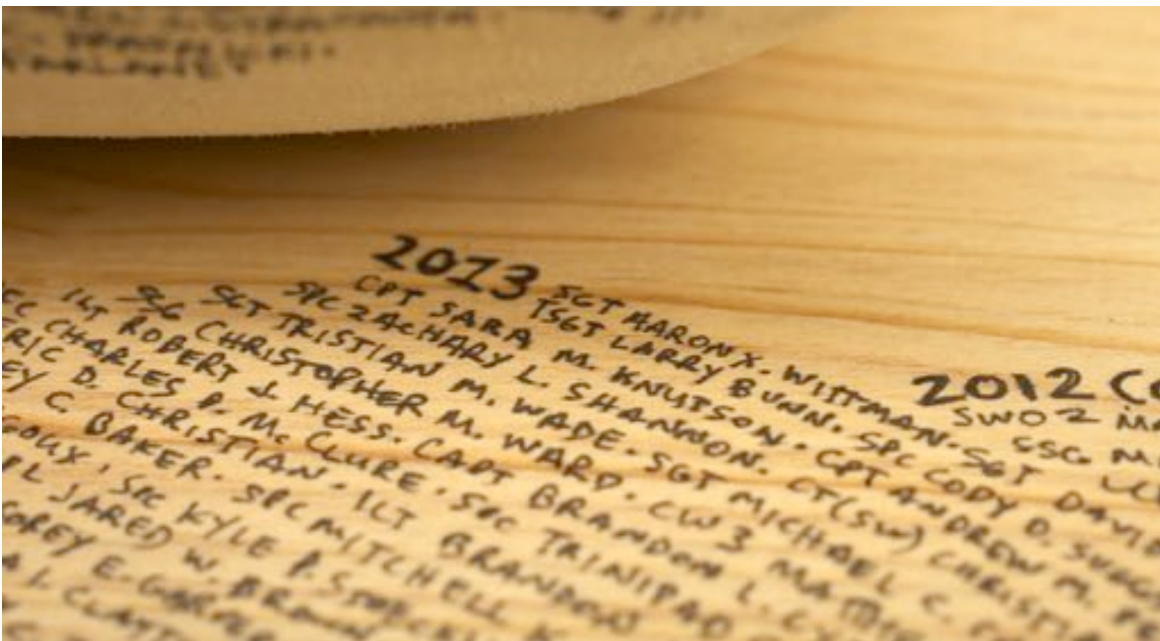


Figure 3: Fallen Soldiers (CPT Sara M. Knutson written on platform)



Figure 4: *Fallen Soldiers*

On the other end of the spectrum, “Reintegration” and “Lift and Drag” were pieces trying to reach the art audience.

In “Reintegration,” I made the chair for myself, a very personal chair complete with the best and the worst that I experienced while in the Army – the wings under the right arm and the carved notch for my memorial bracelet on the left, respectively. This was my chair. In inviting others to sit, I was inviting them to experience those sounds that transported me to a place of nostalgia. In a world where I am not part of that group anymore, I can instantly be back in that situation, for better or worse. To have moved on, yet still miss it. The instability of the floor mimicking that of my transition. The floor and the chair were abstracted from my experience. In this way, they allowed for more open-ended conclusions.



Figure 5: *Reintegration*



Figure 6: *Reintegration*



Figure 7: *Reintegration (floor detail)*



Figure 8: *Reintegration (chair detail)*

“Lift and Drag” continued in the domestic theme, interrupting the common living space with a punch from the past. The scale of the single life-size 24’ blade was imposing. Distilling both lives down to the simplest terms, they are, in fact, both fan blades. Both create wind; one can feel the effects of each. It was an attempt to cover the past up with the present; an attempt to mend. I was trying a different approach with this piece to allow the viewer to enter with humor before getting to the weight.



Figure 9: *Lift and Drag*

In discussion with people who experienced both pieces, I realized that perhaps my avenue of approach had been wrong this whole time. Maybe I was trying to tell my story to the wrong people. I was getting two steps ahead of myself. Maybe I needed to start with people who have similar stories. I needed to tell my story to the Erins. AA members don't tell their stories at a wedding reception. They have meetings with other alcoholics and tell their stories to each other. In this communal storytelling, they find strength.

Cleve Jones: The Evolution of a Memorial

Only in being honest with others are we able to be honest with ourselves. - Ernest Kurtz,
The Spirituality of Imperfection

Collective Cadence

Stories that start at birth,
end with death,
and include everything in-between.

A Medal of Honor recipient,
A mistake.

Morning coffee;
a late night call.

Whispered first names;
an off-key chorus;
deafening explosions;
silence.

One child playing;
another lifeless.

On the battlefield,
concealment is a survival skill.

Off that battlefield,
transparency enables survival.

Stories that shape the fabric of our experience
The threads that bind us

Through the telling of each,
we are united as one.

In the telling of the collective,
We find our own.

These are our stories.
This is our story.

In 1985, Cleve Jones marched with other San Franciscans during their annual candlelight march to city hall in memory of Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Marchers had 1,000 names of their friends and loved ones – fellow San Franciscans – who died in the previous decade because of AIDS. Marchers placed the placards on city hall. Stepping back, they bore the resemblance of a patchwork quilt and, two years later, the NAMES (AIDS Memorial) Quilt was born. Today, the quilt is made up of over 48,000 individual 3'x 6' panels. Most panels are accompanied by letters, bios, and photos.⁵

The NAMES Quilt is the evolution of a community project from a memorial. Beyond the object, Cleve Jones created a system. Under a similar system, “Fallen Soldiers” became “Collective Cadence.” Parts can be added to and subtracted from the whole without changing its wholeness.

We need the past to cope with present landscapes. We selectively perceive what we are accustomed to seeing; features and patterns in the landscape make sense to us because we share a history with them. Every object, every grouping, every view is intelligible partly because we are already familiar with it. We see things simultaneously as they are and as we viewed them before.⁶

⁵ <http://www.aidsquilt.org/about/the-aids-memorial-quilt>

⁶ Lowenthal, David. "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory." *Geographical Review* 65.1 (1975): 1-36. Print.

The uniform that I wore for almost a decade was visually constructed of the digital camouflage pattern. It created its own rhythm, similar to that felt while running to beat of cadence. In “Collective Cadence,” the digital camouflage pattern of the boxes serves as a metaphor for how the experiences contained within are often hidden from the public. Concealment on the battlefield is a survival skill. Concealment off the battlefield could have the opposite effect. Transparency becomes essential to survival.

Looking through yet simultaneously looking within. Looking close while simultaneously looking beyond. Neither whole; both comprised of segments. Camouflaged while trying to be seen. Individual stories fill the front sides of the boxes. Each voice is singular. From the back, that same panel is indiscernible from the rest. Her story is part of the collective. She becomes part of the whole. Both exist simultaneously – the contrast between military order and the heart and soul of its individuals.

Order and a system, two ideas critical to a mission. The military is one of a few select groups whose individuals immediately know their blood type. Hell, we wear it on our sleeves, literally. It can be a matter of life or death. Another A POS could save my life. And so we are joined, both in life and in the installation.



Figure 10: *Collective Cadence*



Figure 11: *Collective Cadence (Blood Type detail)*

John Dewey observed that art, as an external and physical object, is naturally removed from its connection with the human experience that produced it. He suggested that the "task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience."⁷

Like Maya Lin's Vietnam Wall, the text size of "Collective Cadence" requires the viewer to be in the same physical space as the work in order to read it. Lin talks about the act of reading as inherently private.⁸ The stories displayed are created for a private reading, yet happened within an otherwise public space. With some stories, the reflection of the words is read more easily than the etched poem; the shadow overtakes the physical. What is not there becomes more obvious than what is. When viewed from a certain angle, the viewer catches a glimpse of himself. Can he see himself not only visually, but in a phrase of that experience? Can he move beyond the actual experience to the human emotions that connect us? To become, for an instant, a part of the community.

Taking a cue from Annie Dillard's *Mornings Like This*, I extracted words from the stories that people sent me. "By entering a found text as poem, the poet doubles its context. The original meaning remains intact, but now it swings between two poles."⁹ Except for my own story, the words are not mine. They are those of the people who experienced them. I lifted them, never adding. In this way, I became co-author to each story. They wrote the prose. I condensed their words into poetry. Each poem is made up

⁷ Michel, Karl F. "Drawing on Experience: A Study of Vietnam Veteran Artists." *Studies in Art Education*. 2004

⁸ Lin, Maya Ying. *Boundaries*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

⁹ Dillard, Annie. *Mornings like This: Found Poems*. 1st ed. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1995.

of excerpts from the longer story – a story that takes place over a few hours or a single day. Just a few hours within a 24-year military career. One soldier among the 1.3 million¹⁰ currently serving, one soldier as part of a group that account for less than 1% of the U.S. population. A drop in the bucket. A snapshot. A breath. A few lines.

“Shared storytelling creates community... When we tell our own stories, we gain respect and listen to others; to listen to others enables us to tell our own.”¹¹ The readings of Kurtz’s *The Spirituality of Imperfection* allowed me to see the impact of our own words, of sharing experiences, and of the power of trusting in others. “Collective Cadence” became a way to tell my story in the telling of so many others. In theirs, I saw mine.



Figure 12: *Collective Cadence* (handwriting detail)

¹⁰ “Department of Defense (DoD) Releases Fiscal Year 2017 President’s Budget Proposal.” U.S. Department of Defense. 9 Feb 2016. Web. <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/652687/department-of-defense-dod-releases-fiscal-year-2017-presidents-budget-proposal>

¹¹ Kurtz, Ernest, and Katherine Ketcham. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Modern Wisdom from Classic Stories*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

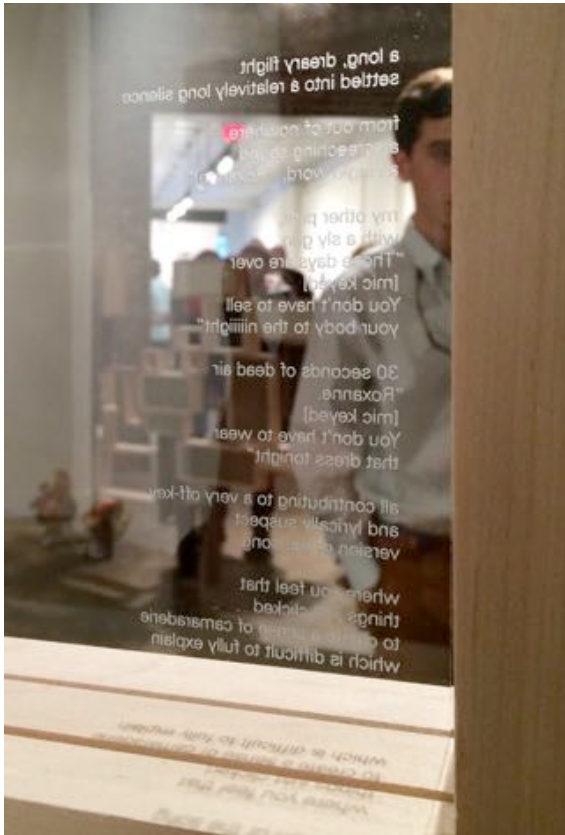


Figure 13: *Collective Cadence* (text detail)



Figure 14: *Collective Cadence*



Figure 15: *Collective Cadence* (detail)



Figure 16: *Collective Cadence (detail)*



Figure 17: *Collective Cadence (Sara in foreground; Noah in background)*

In some ways, this project accomplished its mission far before construction even began. Relationships were reignited. Connections were made. I had a daily mission. One participant took two months to send his story. He apologized for taking so long, but explained that it took him that long to put the words on paper, to say them out loud, and to make them permanent. But that he felt a sense of relief and healing when he did. I found it impossible to convey those emotions in the installation. But they live in me and continue to fuel my work.

Of course, no plan ever survives first contact.

The NAMES Quilt started with a vision of a memorial. With that sediment still at its core, it has grown to become so much more. I guess I'm just a romantic. About face. Move out, smartly. I have a mission to accomplish.

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<http://www.aidsquilt.org/about/the-aids-memorial-quilt>

Kurtz, Ernest, and Katherine Ketcham. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Modern Wisdom from Classic Stories*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Lin, Maya Ying. *Boundaries*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Lowenthal, David. "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory." *Geographical Review* 65, no 1 (1975): 1-36.

Michel, Karl F. "Drawing on Experience: A Study of Vietnam Veteran Artists." *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education* 45, no 3 (2004): 189–205.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

COMMAND PHILOSOPHY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AVIATION COMPANY, 1ST U.S. ARMY SUPPORT BATTALION (SINAI)
MULTINATIONAL FORCE AND OBSERVERS
SINAI, EGYPT
APO AE 09832



MFO-1SB-AVCO

17 May 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR SOLDIERS OF AVIATION COMPANY, 1ST SUPPORT
BATTALION

SUBJECT: Policy Letter #1 – Philosophy of Command

1. **PURPOSE:** To describe the Philosophy of Command under which I will operate
2. I feel privileged to command this distinguished company and proud to serve with such a fine group of Soldiers. Upon assumption of command, I want to make it clear just what my expectations are for each Officer, Warrant Officer, NCO, and Soldier. Equally important, I want you to know what you can expect from me.
3. I believe in and practice leadership by example. I will never ask you to do anything that I would not do myself. I prefer a relaxed atmosphere, but will demand a high standard in every area, from training to discipline. A positive attitude will take you far. I expect you not to quit on yourself or your Soldiers, and you can expect the same from me. I believe in approaching each job with a sense of urgency, but not panic.
4. Teamwork is the cornerstone of a positive work environment. I prefer a round-table atmosphere where all voices are heard. In order to be successful in such an environment, I

expect each of us to be loyal, to work with one another as a cohesive unit, to be open to new ideas, and to learn from our mistakes. The success of the team comes before the success of the individual.

5. Our mission is far too critical and complex for us to become complacent. You must learn your craft thoroughly and understand where you fit into the big picture. Empower others to do what is right and take initiative. Take pride in yourself and your job. Personal discipline, mentorship, and a positive attitude will sustain you over the long haul. I believe in working smarter, not harder. We will not spend time doing a job just to fill time, nor will we rush through one to beat the clock.

6. These principles are by no means inclusive. My intent is to provide you with a sense of those concepts most important to me. I intend to practice this philosophy through actions rather than words. I expect all Soldiers and leaders in this company to do the same.

7. ***“NOMADS!”***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia Dietz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ALICIA DIETZ
CPT, AV
Commanding

APPENDIX B

COLLECTIVE CADENCE BOOK

A collection of the 117 active duty soldiers, veterans, and family members who so generously shared their stories for the first iteration of this project

To read their full stories, go to:

http://static1.squarespace.com/static/536a2df8e4b08099c2dbcb10/t/572cb7dc7da24fb3cbe7ddb2/1462548445189/Collective_Cadence.pdf

VITA

Alicia Dietz
www.aliciadietz.com

Exhibitions

- 2016 **The Depot Gallery, VCU MFA Thesis Exhibition, *Collective Cadence*** |
Richmond, VA
Center for Art in Wood, *On the Edge of Your Seat: Chairs for the 21st Century* |
Philadelphia, PA
Art League of Rhode Island, *Support and Defend* | Providence, RI
Arrowmont School of Crafts Gallery, *Touch: Interactive Craft* | Gatlinburg, TN
- 2015 **Frederick Center for the Creative Arts, *Raw Emotions*** | Fredericksburg, VA |
Best in Show
Riverviews Art Space, 7th Annual Juried Show, Mary Holland, Juror | Lynchburg,
VA | **3rd Place Candidacy Show, Warehouse 22** | Richmond, VA
American Tobacco Campus, *Home: FS15*, The Furniture Society | Durham, NC
American Craft Council Show, selected works of VCU | Baltimore, MD
- 2014 **FAB Gallery, *Forefront*** | Richmond, VA
- 2013 **Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Design Show** | Woodstock, VT |
Best in Show
New Hampshire Furniture Masters Gallery, *Fast Forward: Mentoring Makers* |
Concord, NH
Frog Hollow Vermont State Craft Center, *Student Work: Legacy of an Instructor*
| Burlington, VT
Gumbo Art Exhibit, selected works of Burlington College | Burlington, VT
- 2012 **Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Design Show** | Woodstock, VT |
1st Place, Student
Gumbo Art Exhibit, selected works of Burlington College | Burlington, VT

Awards and Honors

- 2016 **NICHE Awards**, “Fallen Soldiers” 2016 NICHE Awards Finalist in Student Wood Category
VCU Graduate Research Grant, “Collective Cadence” Thesis Exhibition
VCU Travel Grant, “Reintegration” Installation
Penland Scholarship in Wood | Penland School of Crafts, NC
Peters Valley Scholarship in Wood | Peters Valley Craft Center, NJ
- 2015 **VMFA Visual Arts Fellowship (Graduate Student)**, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts | Richmond, VA
Emerging Artist and Innovators VMFA Product Award Recipient, VMFA | Richmond, VA
Furniture Society Educational Grant, The Furniture Society | Durham, NC
Anderson Ranch Scholarship in Wood | Anderson Ranch Arts Center, CO
Dana Foundation Scholarship in Glass | Corning Museum of Glass, NY
Dr. Judith Temple Scholarship in Textiles | Arromont School of Arts and Crafts, TN
Penland Scholarship in Printmaking | Penland School of Crafts, NC
Wall of Fame, Vermont Woodworking School | Cambridge, VT
Honor Society, Virginia Commonwealth University | Richmond, VA
Best in Show, “Raw Emotions” October Regional | Fredericksburg Center for the Creative Arts, VA
- 2014 **NICHE Awards**, “The High One” 2014 NICHE Awards Finalist in Student Wood Category
Samuel J. and Eleanor Rosenfeld Scholarship in Wood | Haystack MT School of Crafts, ME
- 2013 **Best In Show**, “Through the Looking Glass” Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Design Competition | Woodstock, VT
First Place – Student Apprentice, “Through the Looking Glass” Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Design Competition | Woodstock, VT
Inaugural Robert Fletcher Memorial Award, Vermont Woodworking School | Cambridge, VT
- 2012 **First Place – Student Apprentice**, “Patriotic Poker” Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Design Competition | Woodstock, VT
- 2007 **Communicative Skills Award**, Aviation Captain’s Career Course, Fort Rucker, AL
- 2003 **Commandant’s List Graduate**, U.S. Army Officer’s Basic Course, Ft. Rucker, AL
- 2001 **Cum Laude Honor Graduate**, Ohio University, Athens, OH
Distinguished Military Graduate, Ohio University, Athens, OH

Publications

- 2016 *American Craft*, “Zoom: On Our Radar” | June/July
- 2015 *Rooted: Creating a Sense of Place: Studio Furniture* (book), Steffanie Dotson, Douglas Congdon-Martin, Schiffer Publishing, Ltd.
The Herald-Sun. “Rags to Riches: Combat Paper Project transforms military uniforms into works of art” Durham, NC | Jan 30
- 2014 *Fine Woodworking*, “Readers Gallery” | August
Woodwork Magazine, “Recent Work Gallery: The Furniture Society” | Winter Issue
New Hampshire Home, “On the Town: Fine Furniture” | Jan-Feb
- 2013 *The Journal of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers*, “Mentoring Makers” | December
Woodworker’s Journal eZine, “Alicia Dietz: Piloting Her Career into Woodworking” | November
- 2012 *Woodshop News*, “Made in Vermont” | December

Professional Experience

UNITED STATES ARMY, 2001 – 2011

Served ten years in combat and in peace keeping operations as a U.S. Army Officer, UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter Pilot, Maintenance Test Pilot, and Company Commander two separate times in charge of over 125 soldiers. As a pilot, I flew over 1,000 accident-free hours. As a commander, I was accountable for over \$92 million worth of equipment. But more importantly, as a leader of troops, I developed a climate of teamwork, loyalty, and trust. The skills I developed in the military are evident every day of my life, both inside and outside the workshop.